



*Office of the United States Attorney
District of Arizona*

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INDIANA MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO THEFT OF GILA RIVER TRIBAL FUNDS

PHOENIX - Timothy Wayne Isabell, 53, of Remington, Ind., pleaded guilty here on May 8, 2006 to Embezzlement from Indian Tribal Organizations. Between April 1 and May 2, 2001 Isabell stole approximately \$96,253 belonging to the Gila River Indian Tribe and the Siloam Indian Baptist Church.

U.S. Attorney Paul K. Charlton stated "It's a tragic loss to a community to have funds provided by their tribe for their church to be used for personal gain by their own church leaders."

Isabell's wife, Sheila, as pastor of the church, had applied to the Gila River Indian Tribe for a grant to construct a community building for the church for the benefit of the tribe. After the tribe issued a check to the church for \$122,946 for the community building, Isabell and his wife began withdrawing funds from the church's bank account for personal expenditures.

Sheila Isabell has also been indicted on the same embezzlement charge and is awaiting trial in federal district court in Phoenix. Her trial date is currently set for May 16, 2006.

Sentencing for Timothy Isabell is set before Judge Mary H. Murguia on August 21, 2006. A conviction for Embezzlement from Indian Tribal Organizations carries a maximum penalty of five years in prison, a \$250,000 fine or both. In determining an actual sentence, Judge Murguia will consult the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines, which provide appropriate sentencing ranges. The judge, however, is not bound by those guidelines in determining a sentence.

The investigation in this case was conducted by the Gila River Police Department. The prosecution is being handled by John R. Lopez IV and John J. Tuchi, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, District of Arizona, Phoenix.

CASE NUMBER: CR-03-1082-PHX-MHM
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